

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3852
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, BY, US
SUBJECT: TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN BURUNDI

REF BUJUMBURA 256 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GRB ASKS BRITISH FOR HELP IN ENGLISH TEACHING.
CABLE DESCRIBES PROBLEMS FACED HERE THIS REGARD AND
SUGGESTS PURSUIT OF INTEREST EXPRESSED BY ENGLISH
SPEAKING UNION IN SUPPORTING ENGLISH INSTRUCTION IN BURUNDI.
END SUMMARY

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR MARK ALLEN, RESIDENT IN KINSHASA AND
ACCREDITED BURUNDI, WAS ASKED BY GRB MINISTER OF EDUCATION
DURING ALLEN'S RECENT VISIT HERE, WHETHER U. K. COULD PROVIDE
PERSONNEL TO SHORE UP ENGLISH TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY OF
BUJUMBURA. ALLEN EXPRESSED PESSIMISM, RECALLING DEPARTURE
BRITISH VOLUNTEERS DURING EARLIER PERIOD, BUT SAID HE
WOULD INFORM LONDON.

2. PRESENT ENGLISH- TEACHING CAPABILITY BURUNDI
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM SEVERELY AFFECTED BY DEPARTURE
FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR MARY ELLEN MCGOUGH. MATAGEKO
(MURUNID, TEFL- TRAINED AT UCLA) WILL BE CALLED ON TO
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FILL GAP, BUT CAN DO ONLY SO MUCH AND ABSENCE NATIVE ENGLISH- SPEAKING PERSONNEL WILL BE MAJOR HANDICAP. BELIEVE MCGOUGH WILL BE DISCUSSING IN FURTHER DETAIL WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS.

3. POST HAS REPORTED TO DEPARTMENT ITS EXCHANGE OF LATTERS WITH FORMER UNDER SECRETARY GEORGE MCGHEE, PRESENT CHAIRMAN OF ENGLISH- SPEAKING UNION, CONCERNING ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING ENGLISH- TEACHING SUPPORT IN BURUNDI. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S CALLING THIS MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENT TO MCGHEE'S ATTENTION IF IT CONCURS, AND ASCERTAINING PRESENT THINKING OF UNION CONCERNING BURUNDI PROJECT.

4. CURRENT JUNCTURE IS IMPORTANT ONE. BURUNDI EDUCATIONAL REORGANIZATION PLAN, AS NOW DRAFTED, UNDERSTOOD TO CALL FOR DIMINUTION IN AMOUNT OF ENGLISH GIVEN MOST SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (CURRENTLY THREE HOURS A WEEK FOR SIX YEARS) BY ELIMINATING ENGLISH FROM CURRICULUM OF EARLY SECONDARY YEARS. PLAN STILL SUBJECT MODIFICATION, AND SOME EDUCATORS ATTEMPTING RESTORE TOTAL TIME DEVOTED TO ENGLISH. THEIR POSITION WEAKENED BY DIFFICULTIES BURUNDI CURRENTLY FACES IN FILLING EXISTING ENGLISH TEACHING POSITIONS WITH QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. TEACHERS OFTEACHERS THUS ASSUME DOUBLE IMPORTANCE.

5. EMBASSY RECONGINZES THE PROBLEM, HIGHLIGHTED BY CURRENT PRESS DEVELOPMENTS, IN PROVIDING HELP IN BURUNDI. BELIEVE, HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT WILL WISH CONSIDER IMPORTANT DEGREE TO WHICH SUCH WINDOWS ON OUTSIDE WORLD CAN CONTRIBUTE TO LONG- TERM EFFORTS DEAL WITH BURUNDI PROBLEM. PRIVATELY- ARRANGED HELP IN ENGLISH INSTRUCTION , PERHAPS ARRANGED IN COORDINATION WITH LONDON IF LATTER INTERESTED, SEEMS WORTH INVESTIGATING IN THIS CONTEXT.

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